



Media Contact: Alexis Shaw  
Wexner Medical Center Media Relations  
614-293-3737  
Alexis.Shaw2@osumc.edu

August 5, 2020

\*\*\* Video and photos available for download: <https://bit.ly/33nTF9Q> \*\*\*

## OHIO STATE EXPERTS OFFER TIPS FOR STUDENTS WHO MISS NORMALCY OF SPORTS, ACTIVITIES

COLUMBUS, Ohio – As the nation continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, the future of school sports and extracurricular activities remains unclear. Sports psychologists at [The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center](#) say this time can be difficult for students, whose identities are deeply rooted in their sport.

Many activities have been canceled this school year, and even for those that will resume in some capacity, athletes will likely compete in empty stadiums and arenas, musicians will play in empty rooms and actors will perform to empty seats. For students at every level who work hard to develop their skills and miss the normalcy of participating in these activities, it can be difficult to deal with these changes.

“If you're in the marching band or you're the varsity football quarterback, whatever it is that you're involved in, your investment in what you're doing is very high,” said [James Houle](#), sports psychologist at The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center. “And to think that your participation in those activities can be compromised in any way feels very scary.”

Houle recommends students follow the three S's to help them through these uncertain times.

- **Stay present** - Rather than worrying about what you're missing out on, think about what you can do right now. Houle says when we live our lives day to day we tend to be happier, even if we're in a difficult situation.
- **Shift your focus** - You can't change the current state of the world, but you can control how you react to it while finding ways to continue to move toward your goals. Try doing some solo workouts and practices or finding another activity to focus on and fill your time.
- **Seek connections** - Talking about your struggles with other students, coaches, parents or counselors can help you realize that you're not alone. At Ohio State, sports teams continue to meet virtually. Houle and his team often join them to ensure that they're getting the support they need.

Houle says even if students are missing after school practices, it's a good idea to keep a schedule to prevent these changes from affecting other areas of life, such as school work.

“If you notice changes in your sleep pattern, appetite or general anxiousness, it's important to speak with a counselor who can help you find ways to cope,” said Houle.

###